



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

November 17, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Principals  
Public School Academy Directors and Authorizers

FROM: Mike Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Important Information on Superintendent's Dropout Challenge

This year, thousands of Michigan elementary, middle, and high school students have begun the process of quietly dropping out of school. While they may continue to attend school for days, weeks or years, most of these students, as early as third grade, have begun to exhibit early warning signs that predict their exit. Early warning signs include the A-B-C's: A-Attendance, B-Behavior, and C-Course performance. These have an 80% accuracy rate of predicting risk of dropout and a 90% accuracy rate of predicting graduation rates within four years.

To identify and support these students long before their process becomes reality, two years ago I launched the Superintendent's Dropout Challenge. As a result, over one-third of all schools (including 142 districts committing all schools) accepted this challenge and identified 10-15 students with multiple early warning dropout signs who were nearing or were in a transitional school year and provided them with appropriate research-based supports and interventions. [Education Week](#) recently validated our K-12 approach.

For buildings and districts already part of this Challenge, your efforts to help students are making a difference and changing lives. In fact, a recent study shows Challenge high schools have decreased their dropout rates by 9% and increased their graduation rate by 10%.

Success is evident. If every district and school becomes committed to this Challenge nearly 55,000 students could be helped each year. Attendance, achievement and graduation rates are increased, state aid maintained or increased; societal costs of dropouts are reduced.

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So today, I am asking every school and district in the state to join this effort and accept the Challenge. I also ask that all Challenge takers reach beyond your boundaries, share your experiences and your results and encourage your colleagues to participate.

Participation in the Challenge is one of the rare opportunities that benefits: teachers, families and students. With your support, I believe this simple effort can make a big difference.

For schools and districts already part of the Challenge, you will receive a form to update your information over the next few weeks. For new Challenge takers, signing up is easy and can be done by completing just a few questions at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2011-12DropoutChallengeSignupSurvey>.

For additional information, visit the Michigan Department of Education's Dropout Challenge web page at [www.michigan.gov/dropoutchallenge](http://www.michigan.gov/dropoutchallenge) or contact Jan Ellis at (517) 373-9391 or [ellisj@michigan.gov](mailto:ellisj@michigan.gov).

cc: Michigan Education Alliance